

177

CURIOUS PARTICULARS
AND
GENUINE ANECDOTES

RESPECTING THE LATE

Lord CHESTERFIELD and DAVID HUME, Esq.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

CHAMBERLAIN'S

AND

ST. JOHN'S



[REVEREND FATHER]

CURIOUS PARTICULARS
AND
GENUINE ANECDOTES

RESPECTING THE LATE

R Stanhope (P. D.) 4th E.

Lord CHESTERFIELD and DAVID HUME, Esq.

WITH A

PARALLEL between these celebrated PERSONAGES.

AND AN

Impartial Character of Lord Chesterfield.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SHORT VINDICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE AND
CHARACTER, OCCASIONED BY A RECENT RE-
FLECTION THROWN UPON THEM, BY THE
AUTHOR OF THE APOLOGY FOR THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF
DAVID HUME.

BY A FRIEND TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

L O N D O N.

PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, AT JOHNSON'S HEAD, NO. 46,
IN FLEET STREET, 1788.



P R E F A C E.

INTERESTING particulars, and genuine anecdotes, relative to justly celebrated personages, have been generally well received by the public. In *political life*, as well as in the *republic of letters*, few have been more admired than the late LORD CHESTERFIELD, and DAVID HUME. We have, accordingly, had their *lives*, *letters*, and characters published; or supplements and apologies, &c. concerning them, printed.

Some of the most entertaining parts of these, the editor of the following selections,

selections, has endeavoured to present to the public, which he hopes will be both *entertaining* and *instructive*. They are taken from different publications respecting Mr. HUME and LORD CHESTERFIELD; or the most amusing parts of these writings thrown together, in a short compass.

The *life* of HUME, already published, makes not a part of this work: but the particulars now inserted concerning Mr. HUME's death and funeral, with his last will and testament, cannot but prove agreeable to many readers; as must the reflections which are added on *dedications*, and *certain authors*.

Besides this, a comparison at some length is made between LORD CHESTERFIELD and Mr. HUME: An impartial
 2 character

character of the former is added, with occasional observations interspersed, tending to vindicate the dignity of the christian philosophy.

The whole is with great deference submitted to the public, for whose entertainment it was originally designed.

CURIOUS



C U R I O U S
PARTICULARS, &c.

S E C T I O N I.

THERE can be no stronger proof of the high estimation in which Mr. Hume was held, and of his being considered as an extraordinary character, than the eager, yet, perhaps, idle curiosity which the public entertained to learn the most minute circumstances respecting his exit.

Mr. Hume's natural temper disposed him to feel, with exquisite sensibility, every thing which affected his literary fame; and notwithstanding his boasted equanimity, philosophy did not shield him from the excessive chagrin which he felt from those arrows, which Envy and Prejudice darted at his reputation. Anxiety,
 B relative

relative to his difference with the whimsical Rousseau extracted from him a personal, but complete justification. The illiberal criticisms which Mr. Gray* threw out against him, in his Epistolary Correspondence, gave him much concern. He saw, with mortification, the laurel wreath which Oxford weaved to cover the bald reputation of Beattie, *his antagonist, not his rival*. And such was the antipathy that subsisted between him and Mr. Tytler, the

* Perhaps the mercenary Mason is more deserving of this censure than Mr. Gray. In order to swell his volume, and to fill his pockets, the former has published a loose and desultory Correspondence, which the latter never dreamt would see the light, and would have reprobated could he ever have conceived the idea of his worst papers being put to this ungenerous and ungrateful use.— Nevertheless, in return to a benefactor, who conferred essential favours upon him, Mr. Mason has, as far as he was able, sacrificed his patron's reputation at the sordid altar of Plutus. The posthumous Poetical Pieces of Mr. Gray, though infinitely valuable, are few in number, and were not likely to answer the interested purposes of the hungry Editor by much emolument. This gentleman, therefore, resolving to establish a literary property or estate, by the name and writings of another, which he honestly acquaints us he was unable to perform by his own, has given to the world, with little labour, a large but meagre Quarto, containing some puerile letters, superior, however, to the Editor's notes, with which they are garnished. And by entitling these "The Poems of Mr. Gray," led the public to buy up a large impression before the deception was discovered. Thus has the ingenious Mason bartered the high poetical and literary reputation of of a worthy man who confided in him for *money*.

Quid non mortalia pectora coges.
Auri sacra fames?

the author of the Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots; that not satisfied with a most acrimonious note,* which he has published in the last edition of his History, he would not even sit in company with him; and the appearance of the one effected the instantaneous withdrawing of the other.

Mr. Hume, in the History of his Life, has not informed us of his having stood candidate for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy, in the University of Edinburgh; of the opposition which the Scots clergy excited to his pretensions;

B 2

tenfions;

* This note deserves a place, as it will show that even Mr. Hume himself could occasionally be guilty of, *‘the illiberal arrogance, petulance and scurrility which distinguish the Warburtonian School.’* “But there is a person, that has writ an *‘Enquiry, historical and critical, into the evidence against Mary Queen of Scots;’* and has attempted to refute the foregoing narrative. He “quotes a single passage of the narrative in which Mary is said “simply to refuse answering; and then a single passage from Goodall, in which she boasts simply that she will answer; and he very “civilly and almost directly calls the author a liar, on account of “this pretended contradiction. That whole Enquiry, from beginning to end, is composed of such *scandalous artifices*. And from “this instance, the reader may judge of the *candour, fair dealing, veracity, and good manners* of the Enquirer, there are, “indeed, three events in our history, which may be regarded as “touchstones of party-men. An English Whig, who asserts the “reality of the popish Plot, an Irish Catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641, and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of Queen Mary, must be considered as men beyond the “reach of argument or reason, and must be left to their prejudices.”

tensions; nor of the enquiry which was moved for in the venerable assembly of the Church of Scotland, respecting the principles inculcated in his writings; and of the censures proposed to be inflicted on him as the author of Heretical Doctrines.

He has observed in the nineteenth page of his Life, that his History of Great Britain met at first with an indifferent reception. But with respect to this, Mr. Hume himself was mistaken. The first edition of the History of Great Britain, for the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, was printed at Edinburgh, A. D. 1754, for *Hamilton, Balfour, and Neil*. Hamilton, upon his expectations from this book, took a shop, and settled in London. He applied to the London booksellers to take copies of the History from him, but none of them would deal with an *interloper*. Hamilton, sadly distressed, has recourse to *his friend*, Mr. Millar; Millar *obliges him* by taking fifty copies: but when gentlemen, in his well-frequented shop, asked for the book, “Pho, (says Millar generously) “it is incomplete, another volume is coming out soon. You are well—“come to the use of this in the mean time.” Thus did Millar circulate the fifty copies among some hundred readers, without selling one,
I
And

And by this ingenious device attained his favourite purpose, of getting Hamilton to sell him his right in the copy for a trifle, as being an insignificant performance.

Mr. Hume, and the late Reverend Dr. Jardine, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, lived in habits of much intimacy. Religion, *natural* and *revealed*, was frequently the subject of their conversation. It happened one night, after they had entertained themselves with theological controversy, that Mr. Hume's politeness, when bidding adieu, would not permit Dr. Jardine (whose oeconomy was not incumbered with many domesticks) to light him down stairs. Mr. Hume stumbled in the dark, and the Doctor hearing it, ran to his assistance with a candle, and when he had recovered, his guest said to him, "David, I have often told you not to rely
" too much upon yourself, and that *natural*
" *light* is not *sufficient*." This pleasantry Mr. Hume never relished.

As a proof of the steadiness of Mr. Hume's sceptical tenets it may be observed, that when he published the first volume of his History of Great Britain, he was advised, that the opinions he had delivered concerning matters of religion, would hurt the sale of his work; and
that

that some apology would be proper. He accordingly in his second volume, p. 449, when speaking of the religious parties, subjoins the following note, which when his fame was established beyond the reach of party, he cancelled as unworthy of admission.

“ This sophism, of arguing from the abuse
 “ of any thing against the use of it, is one of
 “ the grossest, and at the same time, the most
 “ common, to which men are subject. The
 “ history of all ages, and none more than that
 “ of the period, which is our subject, offers
 “ us examples of the abuse of religion; and
 “ we have not been sparing, in this volume
 “ more than in the former, to remark them:
 “ But whoever would thence draw an inference
 “ to the disadvantage of religion in general,
 “ would argue very rashly and erroneously.
 “ The proper office of religion is to reform
 “ mens lives, to purify their hearts, to enforce
 “ all moral duties, and to secure obedience to
 “ the laws and civil magistrate. While it pur-
 “ sues these salutary purposes, its operations,
 “ tho’ infinitely valuable, are secret and silent,
 “ and seldom come under the cognizance of
 “ history. That adulterate species of it alone,
 “ which inflames faction, animates sedition,
 “ and prompts rebellion, distinguishes itself
 “ on

“ on the open theatre of the world, and is
 “ the great source of revolutions and public
 “ convulsions. The historian, therefore, has
 “ scarce occasion to mention any other kind
 “ of religion; and he may retain the highest
 “ regard for true piety, even while he exposes
 “ all the abuses of the false. He may even
 “ think, that he cannot better show his at-
 “ tachment to the former than by detecting
 “ the latter, and laying open its absurdities
 “ and pernicious tendency.

“ It is no proof of irreligion in an historian,
 “ that he remarks some fault or imperfection in
 “ each sect of religion, which he has occasion
 “ to mention. Every institution, however di-
 “ vine, which is adopted by men, must partake
 “ of the weakness and infirmities of our nature;
 “ and will be apt, unless carefully guarded, to
 “ degenerate into one extreme or the other.
 “ What species of devotion so pure, noble, and
 “ worthy the Supreme Being, as that which is
 “ most spiritual, simple, unadorned, and which
 “ partakes nothing either of the senses or ima-
 “ gination? Yet it is found by experience, that
 “ this mode of worship does very naturally,
 “ among the vulgar, mount up into extrava-
 “ gance and fanaticism. Even many of the first
 “ reformers

“ reformers are exposed to this reproach ; and
 “ their zeal, though in the event it proved
 “ extremely useful, partook strongly of the en-
 “ thusiastic genius : Two of the judges in the
 “ reign of Charles the Second, scrupled not to
 “ advance this opinion even from the bench.
 “ Some mixture of ceremony, pomp, and orna-
 “ ment may seem to correct the abuse ; yet will
 “ it be found very difficult to prevent such a
 “ form of religion from sinking sometimes into
 “ superstition. The church of England itself,
 “ which is perhaps the best medium among these
 “ extremes, will be allowed, at least during the
 “ age of archbishop Laud, to have been some-
 “ what infected with a superstition, resembling
 “ the Popish ; and to have payed a higher re-
 “ gard to some positive institutions, than the
 “ nature of the things, strictly speaking, would
 “ permit. It is the business of an historian to
 “ remark these abuses of all kinds ; but it be-
 “ longs also to a prudent reader to confine the
 “ representations, which he meets with, to that
 “ age alone of which the author treats. What
 “ absurdity, for instance, to suppose, that the
 “ Presbyterians, Independants, Anabaptists,
 “ and other sectaries of the present age partake
 “ of all the extravagancies, which we remark
 “ in those, who bore these appellations in the
 “ last

“ last century? The inference indeed seems
 “ juster; where sects have been noted for
 “ fanaticism during one period, to conclude,
 “ that they will be very moderate and reason-
 “ able in the subsequent. For as the nature of
 “ fanaticism during one period, is to abolish
 “ all slavish submission to priestly power, it
 “ follows, that as soon as the first ferment is
 “ abated, men are naturally, in such sects, left
 “ to the free use of their reason, and shake
 “ off the fetters of custom and authority.”

To say barely, that Mr. Hume in his moral
 character was unexceptionable, would be doing
 him injustice; he was truly amiable, gentle,
 hospitable, and humane. His temper was cast
 in the happiest mould, if we may not except to
 his anxious and extreme sensibility, in every
 thing which affected his literary reputation.
 It is told, that an elderly woman in the suburbs
 of Edinburgh, whose excess of zeal was pro-
 portionable to her want of sense and discretion,
 called on Mr. Hume; declaimed violently
 against his sceptical principles, as she had
 C learned

learned them by report ; represented, that he was nodding on the brink of everlasting destruction ; and delivered an earnest prayer, that it would please divine grace to give him to *see* the error of his ways. Mr. Hume listened to her with attention and good humour, thanked the lady for her concern about his future welfare, and expressed a desire to know what was her line in life. She informed him, that she was a married woman, and that her husband was a tallow-chandler in the neighbourhood ; upon which Mr. Hume replied, “ Good wo-
 “ man, since you have expressed so earnest a
 “ desire that I should be inspired with *inward*
 “ *light*, I beg you will supply me with *out-*
 “ *ward light* also.” The matron retired, not a little satisfied with the commission which he gave her, and her husband thenceforwards supplied Mr. Hume’s family with candles.

Notwithstanding the ideas which zealots may have formed of Mr. Hume’s principles, as latitudinarian, as atheistical, as damnable : his brother’s notions of them were very different. For, speaking of the Historian one day, he expressed himself in this manner, “ My bro-
 “ ther Davie is a good enough sort of a man,
 “ *but rather narrow minded.*”

As

As to Mr. Hume's abilities as a Philosopher, and an Historian, his Works are the basis on which posterity will rear his everlasting fame.

A few months before his death, Mr. Hume was persuaded by his friends to try the effects of a long journey, and the Bath waters: but finding his malady to increase, he resigned all hopes of life. He maintained, however, his usual cheerfulness; and being resolved to make the most of the short remainder of his lease, he wrote to his friends in Edinburgh, informing them of his resolution to be in that city by a certain day, which he named; and separately requested their company to dinner on the day following. Accordingly, Lord Elbank, Professor Ferguson, Mr. Home the Dramatic Poet, Dr. Smith, Dr. Blair, Dr. Black, and others of his literary friends, obeyed the summons, and took a sort of farewell dinner with their dying friend. His *flowery* rival in historic fame was also invited. But, alas! the Lord Advocate of Scotland invites this *Reverend Doctor* on that very day to a turtle feast. What was to be done? both invitations could not be embraced;—the contest was short: For as it would seem, this

Historian's taste is almost as elegant in eating, as in writing, he judiciously preferred the *turtle* of my Lord Advocate to the *mutton* of David Hume.

Never did death make more regular and visible approaches than to Mr. Hume. He met these with a cheerfulness and resignation, which could only be the result of a vigorous understanding, and a well-spent life. He still went abroad, called upon his friends, but as the fatigue of a chaise was now become intolerable, he went in a sedan chair, and his ghastly looks bore the most striking appearances of speedy death. His situation was the more uncomfortable, that in his weak emaciated state, the physicians prescribed to him instead of a down bed, to lie on a rugged pallet*.

He had already settled his affairs, and his facetiousness still suggested to him to make some verbal legacies, which would not have been so suitable to the gravity of a solemn deed. His friend Mr. Home the Poet, affected

* His disease was a diarrhoea; the physicians were divided about the seat of the malady. There is reason however to conjecture, that his disorder originated from a course of eating rather fully, without drinking in proportion.

fect a delicacy which abhorred even the taste of Port wine; this whimsical nicety had often been the subject of Mr. Hume's railery, and he left verbally to his friend the poet, *one bottle* of Port, and ten dozen of Claret, but on this condition, that the poet should drink the Port at two sittings, before he tasted the Claret.

Such was the estimation in which Mr. Hume was held, from his amiable qualities as a citizen, as well as from his literary fame, that for some weeks before his death, his situation became the universal topick of conversation and enquiry; each individual expressing an anxious solicitude about his health, as if he had been his intimate and particular friend.

On the twenty-fifth of August, Mr. Hume's character was put beyond the reach of being sullied by human frailty*. As soon as he conceived himself to be in a dying way, he purchased a spot for the depositing of his ashes;

* Mr. Hume, after his circumstances became affluent, lived very hospitably and genteely. Yet he left to his relations upwards of 10,000*l.* of his own acquiring. He had a pension from government of 500*l.* per annum.

ashes; the south-west corner of the Caston ^{Caston} burying-ground at Edinburgh, *a rock wherein never man had been laid*. And from the particular charge he gave about his corpse, it would seem he was not altogether devoid of apprehensions of its being treated with insult.

The anxious attention with which the public viewed every circumstance respecting Mr. Hume's illness was not terminated even by his death. From the busy curiosity of the mob, one would have presumed them to entertain notions that the ashes of Mr. Hume were to have been the cause or the object of miraculous exertion. As the physicians of London and Edinburgh were divided about the seat of his disorder, those of the city where he died, proposed that his body should be opened: but this, his brother, who was also his executor, agreeably to the orders of the deceased, would not permit.

It is hardly to be credited, that the grave-diggers, digging with pick-axes Mr. Hume's grave, should have attracted the gaping curiosity of the multitude. That, notwithstanding

ing a heavy rain, which fell during the interment, multitudes of all ranks gazed at the funeral procession*, as if they had expected the hearse to have been consumed in livid flames, or encircled with a ray of glory; that people in a sphere much above the rabble would have sent to the sexton for the keys of the burying-ground, and paid him to have access to visit the grave. And that on a Sunday evening (the gates of the burying-ground being opened for another funeral) the company, from a public walk in the neighbourhood, flocked in such crouds to Mr. Hume's grave, that his brother actually became apprehensive upon the unusual concourse, and ordered the grave to be railed in with all expedition.

After his interment, two trusty persons watched the grave for about eight nights. The watch was set by eight at night; at which time a pistol was fired, and so continued to be every hour till day-light. Candles in a
lanthorn

* When the mob were assembled round Mr. Hume's door to see the corpse taken out to interment, the following short dialogue passed between two of the refuse of the rabble: "Ah, (says one) he was an Atheist." "No matter, (says another) he was an *honest* man."

lanthorn were placed upon the grave, where they burned all night; and the grease which dropped in renewing or snuffing the candles was to be seen upon the grave afterwards.



CERTI-

CERTIFIED COPY

OF THE

LAST WILL and TESTAMENT

OF

DAVID HUME, Esq.

D



C O P Y.

I DAVID HUME, second lawful
“ son of Joseph Home of Ninewells, Advo-
“ cate, for the love and affection I bear to
“ John Home, of Ninewells, my brother,
“ and for other causes, Do, by these pre-
“ sents, under the reservations and burthens
“ after mentioned, Give and Dispose to the
“ said John Home, or, if he die before me,
“ to David Home, his second son, his heirs
“ and assigns whatsoever, all lands, heri-
“ tages, debts and sums of money, as well
“ heritable as moveable, which shall belong
“ to me at the time of my decease, as also
“ my whole effects in general, real and per-
“ sonal, with and under the burthen of the fol-
“ lowing legacies, *viz.* To my sister, Ka-
“ therine Home, the sum of Twelve hun-

“ dred pounds sterling, payable the first term
 “ of Whitsunday, or Martinmas, after my
 “ decease, together with all my English books,
 “ and the live rent of my house in St. James’s
 “ Court, or in case that house be sold at
 “ the time of my decease, Twenty pounds a
 “ year during the whole course of her life :
 “ To my friend Adam Ferguson, Professor of
 “ Moral Philosophy in the College of Edin-
 “ burgh, Two hundred pounds sterling : To
 “ my friend, M. Delembert, Member of the
 “ French Academy, and of the Academy
 “ of Sciences in Paris, Two hundred pounds :
 “ To my friend, Dr. Adam Smith, late Pro-
 “ fessor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, I
 “ leave all my manuscripts without excep-
 “ tion, desiring him to publish *my Dialogues*
 “ *on Natural Religion*, which are compre-
 “ hended in this present bequest; but to pub-
 “ lish no other papers which he suspects not
 “ to have been written within these five years,
 “ but to destroy them all at his leisure : And
 “ I even leave him full power over all my
 “ papers, except the Dialogues above men-
 “ tioned : And though I can trust to that
 “ intimate and sincere friendship, which has
 “ ever subsisted between us, for his faithful
 “ execution of this part of my Will, yet,
 “ as a small recompence of his pains in cor-
 “ recting

“ recting and publishing this work, I leave
 “ him Two hundred pounds, to be paid im-
 “ mediately after the publication of it: I
 “ also leave to Mrs. Anne and Mrs. Janet
 “ Hepburn, daughter of Mr. James Hep-
 “ burn, of Keith, One hundred pounds a
 “ piece: To my cousin, David Campbell,
 “ son of Mr. Campbell, Minister of Lilly-
 “ fleaf, One hundred pounds: To the In-
 “ firmary of Edinburgh, Fifty pounds: To
 “ all the servants who shall be in my family
 “ at the time of my decease, one year’s wages;
 “ and to my house-keeper, Margaret Irvine,
 “ three year’s wages: And I also ordain,
 “ that my brother, or nephew, or executor,
 “ whoever he be, shall not pay up to the
 “ said Margaret Irvine, without her own con-
 “ sent, any sum of money which I shall
 “ owe her at the time of my decease, whe-
 “ ther by bill, bond, or for wages, but shall
 “ retain it in his hand, and pay her the legal
 “ interest upon it, till she demand the prin-
 “ cipal: And in case my brother above men-
 “ tioned shall survive me, I leave to his son
 “ David, the sum of a Thousand pounds to
 “ assist him in his education: But in case
 “ that by my brother’s death before me, the
 “ succession of my estate and effects shall de-
 “ volve to the aforesaid David, I hereby bur-
 “ then

“ then him, over and above the payment of
 “ the aforesaid legacies, with the payment of
 “ the sums following : To his brothers, Jo-
 “ seph and John, a Thousand pounds a piece :
 “ To his sisters, Catherine and Agnes, Five
 “ hundred pounds a piece : All which sums,
 “ as well as every sum contained in the pre-
 “ sent disposition (except that to Dr. Smith)
 “ to be payable the first term of Whitfun-
 “ day, and Martinmas, after my decease ; and
 “ all of them without exception, in sterling
 “ money. And I do hereby nominate and
 “ appoint the said John Home, my brother,
 “ and failing of him by decease, the said Da-
 “ vid Home, to be my sole executor and
 “ universal legatee, with and under the bur-
 “ thens above-mentioned ; reserving always
 “ full power and liberty to me at any time in
 “ my life, even in death-bed, to alter and in-
 “ novate these presents, in whole or in part, and
 “ to burthen the same with such other legacies
 “ as I shall think fit. And I do hereby declare
 “ these presents to be a good, valid, and suffi-
 “ cient evident, albeit found in my custody,
 “ or in the custody of any other person, at the
 “ time of my death : CONSENTING to the re-
 “ gistration hereof in the books of council
 “ and session, or other judges books competent
 “ therein to remain for preservation, and there-
 “ to

“ to I constitute Mr. David Rae, Advocate,
“ my procurator.

“ In witness whereof these presents, con-
“ sisting of this and the preceding page, are
“ written and subscribed by me on this Fourth
“ of January, One thousand seven hundred
“ and seventy-six, at Edinburgh, before these
“ witnesses, the Right Honourable the Earl
“ of Home, and Mr. John M'Gowan, clerk
“ to the signet.

“ (Signed) DAVID HUME.

“ HOME, witness;
“ Jo. M'GOWAN, witness.
“ Day and date as above,

“ I also Ordain, That if I shall die any
“ where in Scotland, I shall be buried in a
“ private manner in the Calton church yard,
“ the south side of it, and a monument be
“ built over my body, at an expence not
“ exceeding a hundred pounds, with an inscrip-
“ tion containing only my name, with the year
“ of

“ of my birth and death, leaving it to posterity to add the rest.

“ (Signed) DAVID HUME.

“ At Edinburgh,
“ 15th April, 1776.

“ I also leave, for rebuilding the bridge of
“ Chirnside, the sum of a hundred pounds;
“ but on condition that the managers of the
“ bridge shall take none of the stones for building the bridge from the quarry of Ninewells,
“ except from that part of the quarry which
“ has been already opened. I leave to my
“ nephew, Joseph, the sum of Fifty pounds
“ to enable him to make a good sufficient
“ drain and sewer round the house of Ninewells, but on condition that if that drain and
“ sewer be not made, from whatever cause,
“ within a year after my death, the said Fifty
“ pounds shall be paid to the poor of the parish of Chirnside: To my sister, instead of
“ all my English books, I leave her a hundred volumes at her choice: To David
“ Waite, servant to my brother, I leave the
“ sum

“ sum of Ten pounds, payable the first term
“ after my death.

“ (Signed) DAVID HUME.”

In this place of the original Will there are
several lines deleted, after which follow these
words: “ This last clause was erased, and
obliterated by myself.

“ (Signed) , DAVID HUME.”



O N

D E D I C A T I O N S.

E 2



SECTION II.

ON DEDICATIONS.

THE above particulars will have shewn to readers, the *man* and the *philosopher*, as well as the highest respect that was paid to eminent *virtue and abilities*, even by those in the lower classes, who had differed so widely from Mr. Hume in *religious and political opinions*, or who continued to *reprobate his principles*.

But let us next proceed to the apology for the life and writings of our philosopher, and see the reasons for his not having dedicated his works to any great men.

To

To confess the truth, he wrote, generally, upon subjects of which the modern nobility are, for the most part, so contemptibly ignorant, that to have inscribed performances so scientific, to such patrons, would involve the Philosopher in a similar error of judgment. Indeed, nothing is more offensive to men of true taste, and right feeling, than the *condescension* of persons of genius, to persons of rank, merely as such. This it is, more than any thing else, that hath helped to degrade the literary character; which, as it implies a superior vigour of intellect, and a more enlarged capacity, possesses, naturally, an unrivalled dignity. According to all the systems of all the sects, it is allowed that the human understanding is the greatest, as it is the most boasted, distinction of *human beings*; consequently, one of these beings must rise higher than another in the scale of rationality, only by so much, as the distinguishing part of him is elevated above that of others: So, likewise, a shallow, illiterate, and vacant creature, must sink in the scale, by the same equitable proportion. Now, it is easy to prove, that, what are called the Great (who are but too commonly the least of all God's little atoms), must, according to the very nature of things, be amongst the *worst* judges of literary merit,

and

and therefore, speaking truly, its most improper patrons. Men, born to titles and to fortunes which descend without effort, or exertion of any talent whatever, imagine the cultivation of the mind totally adventitious: nor does the man of fashion admit it into the catalogue of his accomplishments. Even the harlequin Lord Chesterfield — that successful smatterer — allows only such a share of philosophy, as belongs to the philosophy of the passions; which is nothing more in his idea, than guarding *yourself* while you make a fine, dextrous, and successful push at the passions of *another*. Giddiness, glitter, the indolence of plenty, and above all, its impudence, all contribute to render persons of rank, frivolous, voluble, superficial; the illustrious exceptions of a Bacon, a Bolingbroke, a Shaftesbury, a Lyttleton, a Prussia, a Clarendon, have nothing to do with a rule so deplorably general.

This being the case, can any thing be so preposterous, as to inscribe to the mere tinsel of titles, the labours of learning, or the reflections of accurate and abstruse Philosophy? Yet hath this been, for many ages, the practice. Whence hath it happened?

The question cannot be answered without affecting us.

Fortune seems to have neglected those, whom Nature hath most favoured; and *men of genius*, I suppose, think it but fair, to supply the defect by soliciting *men of money*. This solicitation, however, subjects them to all that rudeness and disdain, which those who have only a handful of authority, bestow upon their flatterers. The flatterers are, in turn, well served; they set out upon a wrong principle.—The intercourse is altogether ill managed. Dedications, being another source of our *national Hypocrisy*, deserve a more correct investigation. It has been just observed, that they are fundamentally false.

A dedication admits of two distinct definitions, of which, one belongs to the Patron, and one to the Author. The Patron not only receives every untruth that can be expressed in the pride of Panegyric, as his due, but believes, at the same time, that he receives it from an unprovided being, who is to exist for a certain space of time upon the success of his encomium. Something therefore is usually sent to keep—(for I would
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adopt the great man's language—"the poor devil of an Author from starving:" The Author's definition, is, on the other hand, so fervile, as to deduct from every sentiment of pity, and make us confess the justice of his disgrace.—He is contented to lavish praises, of which the best man on earth, might blush to be the object, and he expects a golden reward, proportionate to the violent colourings of the varnish, and to the fainter, or fuller blaze of the "lye courteous." Which conduct shall we most reprobate? They are equally contemptible. The traffic should be regulated more consistently. If men of genius must needs address their works to men of rank, let them assert a more noble equality. If they draw the portraits of any person remarkable for any thing, let not a writer think, he is more honoured, than he honours; if he emblazons a name, which was before, glimmering in obscurity, the obligation is, to all intents and purposes, on the side of the Patron; who, but for such imputed excellence, would have passed unobserved through life: if he faithfully displays a character already much celebrated, he is still a benefactor to that character, if it were only for jogging the elbow of the public, which, but for

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such occasional mementos would soon forget the best and brightest man in the world.

Seriously, were literary persons to act upon some such principle as this, and shew their Patrons, that the dealing, was, in point both of praise and profit, entirely on the square, it would check much of that assurance which is now indulged, on the supposition that writers are to offer incense at the shrine of greatness; or,—in words more worthy so grovelling a subject, to making the faggot blaze to gratify folly, and then to be paid for burning the fingers, as the pittance is dispensed by a task-master. Of much more service, indeed, would it be to genius, science, and general learning, if their votaries were more inclined to cherish a spirit of intellectual independency—if, instead of cringing to a courtier, or running, from the most sordid motives, into panegyrical hyperbole, they were to assert their dignity; and shew the superior lustre of talents to the dullness of titles, I say, if a spirit of this kind were aroused, it would soon restore to men of genius, the original rights of literature, at the same time that it would effectually crush that daring insolence, which is now common among a set of people, who
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pique themselves upon advantages which, were the proper levelling power maintained, would of itself, by no means entitle them to equal honours.

Instead of this spirited conduct, however, we have the misfortune to perceive a style of baseness and adulation, creep through most of the epistles dedicatory for the space of several centuries; by which means flattery and fulsomeness is associated with the very idea of those addresses, and the literary character is held, by the dullest of the species, in utter contempt.

What hath, undoubtedly, contributed to bring about so disgraceful a circumstance, is a custom which prevails amongst authors, of swelling the ignorant vanity of Patrons, by submitting to them a performance prior to its entry into the public world: this mode, might, indeed, be reasonable enough, were it only designed as a compliment to the taste of the Patron, which the Authors may be supposed anxious to gratify, before the matter becomes, as it were, public property; but when it is done with a view of begging permission to say civil things of the Patron and his family, it degenerates

into a meanness which justly merits the neglect that commonly attends it.

Ask permission! for what? For distinguishing a man? For circulating the knowledge of his good qualities beyond the narrow circle of very likely, a frivolous set of companions! Require *leave* to do this!—Was there ever heard such an inconsistency?—The point is misconceived. Be it again remarked, that, in true science there is a greatness which can seldom *receive*, though it may often, *confer* obligations. Genius may more properly be said to patronize, than be patronized.

If a production is fit for the eye of men of taste, it ought to be acceptable to men of rank; who are ready enough to be thought in possession of a fine taste themselves, and very frequently, no doubt, pay liberally, for their dedications, solely upon that principle.

If, on the other hand, a performance is crude, trifling, ill-written, and notwithstanding such defects, is, without the consent of the Patron, adorned with a name which it disgraces, such Patron ought publicly to renounce

nounce his protection, and treat the pretender, as every pretender of whatever profession deserves to be treated; still, however, with this salvo, that if the production could have done any service to literature, or promoted, but in a small degree, the cause of science, he would have been the first man to acknowledge *his obligations*, for having been thought a fit patron to assist that cause, and strengthen those services.—While the present scandalous concessions remain, the sneer will inevitably be thrown upon such abominable prostration. I have been somewhat copious on this subject, because it has never, to my recollection, been placed in a proper light.

Perhaps, this doctrine of dedications, may be little relished by those who are daily pampered into conceit by daily panegyric, but it is a justice which every man of letters owes to a character, founded on qualities, which ought to be a better passport to honorary distinctions, than any that can be conferred by royal grant, or by the pride of ancestry.

On such qualities was founded the reputation of David Hume, so that upon *this* occasion,

caſion, at leaſt, his example may be held up to the perſons engaged in literary purſuits, as a proper ſtandard.

It would ſeem from theſe ingenious remarks, on dedicators, that authors ſhould maintain dignity of character, and not prostitute themſelves by addreſſing either folly or ſtupidity in high ſtations; but if they dedicate at all, to addreſs the *wiſe and good only*. This would undoubtedly greatly leſſen the number of dedications, and *Dedicatees* might be held up to view from the middling, or lower ranks, which would exhibit new *phenomena* in the literary region. But alas! this, tho' a debt due to ſuperior merit, is not to be expected, for there would ſeldom be *patronage*, or emoluments in the caſe.

Certainly, in this inſinuating kind of buſineſs, all *daubing*, *flattery*, or *bombaſt*, ſhould be laid aſide, as what may be termed, "*coarſe, plaiſtering work*," has brought addreſſes of this fort into contempt. A *production of genius* requires not patronage; *That*, marked by the *uninterreſting*, the *dull*, or *inſipid*, will not be pushed into public eſteem by any *patron*, or *dedication* whatſoever.

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The names of several sensible, and even eminent writers, have not a little been disgraced by *fulsome dedications*. Dryden, Colley Cibber, Mrs. Centlivre, Lee, Otway, and others, witness to the truth of this; as do some of our modern miscellanies, novels, plays, adventures, &c. ; not forgetting the author of *liberal opinions*. But it is hoped, that with the increase of science, a general reform in this abuse, will take place. *Literary parasites*, in an age of *light and knowledge*, should neither be seen, felt, heard, or understood.



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P A R A L L E L

BETWIXT

DAVID HUME and LORD CHESTERFIELD,

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S E C T I O N III.

A PARALLEL betwixt DAVID HUME
and LORD CHESTERFIELD, both with re-
spect to *Abilities* and *Principles*.

LET me now, says the author of the Apology, &c. draw a slight parallel betwixt this gentleman, and another celebrated writer, who descended into the tomb a little before him. I would persuade the reader to compare with me the system of David Hume, and that of the late Earl of Chesterfield. Not with a view of proposing the former to his imitation—for that point should always be settled by a man's own mind, after a great deal of premeditation upon the matter—but, as it may serve to shew, what hath, indeed, been a principal endeavour in these pages, that it is possible even for sceptics, to be more worthy mem-

bers of society, more reverend to a first cause, whatever it may be, and more essentially the friend of mankind, than the most illustrious persons who have never ventured so far into the recesses of enquiry. Lord Chesterfield was a character more distinguished for the brilliancy of his wit, than the solid powers of his understanding.—In points of philosophy, he was exceedingly superficial, in politics he did not want sagacity or experience. Assisted, however, very much, by the splendours of his title—for a little spark will make a large lustre in a Lord—he sustained his character with singular eclat, and passed in the world (which is very easily dazzled) as a compound of elegance, humour, *morality*, gaiety, and patronage.—These qualities, in a certain degree, we allow him to have possessed, except one: it certainly is not now necessary to observe that it is the word *morality* which must be scratched out of this list. For many years, however, Lord Chesterfield's *morals* were unsuspected; at length, too superficial to be consistent, or perhaps, weary of deceiving the world into notions of his plain dealing, he condescended, in the eve of life, to shew mankind what a bubble he had made of it; how long, and how successful he had sported upon its weaknesses—with how much ease he had played

played the elegant trifler, and by what modes and manœuvres, he had, with a facility which required no effort but a smooth face, and pliable features, led, in victorious chains, a thousand fools to the altars either of ridicule, or debauchery, or destruction.

Such were the principles; such is the system of this *distinguished hypocrite*, by the adoption of whose precepts, it is utterly impossible either for youth or age, wit or wisdom, to escape every thing that is execrable, contemptible, and delusive. The atheistical Hume, as some have called him, was, in comparison with Chesterfield, deserving of every epithet that could be formed in language to express virtue. In his life, writing, and at his death, he seems to have abhorred *disimulation*; and yet, his company “was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious, and literary;” nor had he “any reason to complain of the reception he met from *modest* women, in whose company he was particularly delighted.” He did not, nevertheless, profess a fondness for the society of *modest* women, because it was *safer* to have an affair of gallantry with such, than with a prostitute professed; or because the connection was more elevated and consistent with the amours of a gentleman;

gentleman; nor did he mix with the gay, and careless, with any latent design to take an advantage of the chearful hour, in order to make himself master of the secrets of the heart, imparted in its fullness—and consequently master of the person to whom that entrapped heart had the misfortune to belong. By no means.—Whatever objections may lie against the philosophy of Hume; none of them are of this nature; since his most abstract researches were in favour of a behaviour perfectly irreproachable.

Whoever is acquainted with Mr. Hume's writings, will bear witness, that he was a lover of decency, order and decorum. Whoever knew the man, can attest, that, the following passages are no wise exaggerated.

“ I *am*,” says he, “ or rather *was*, (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding

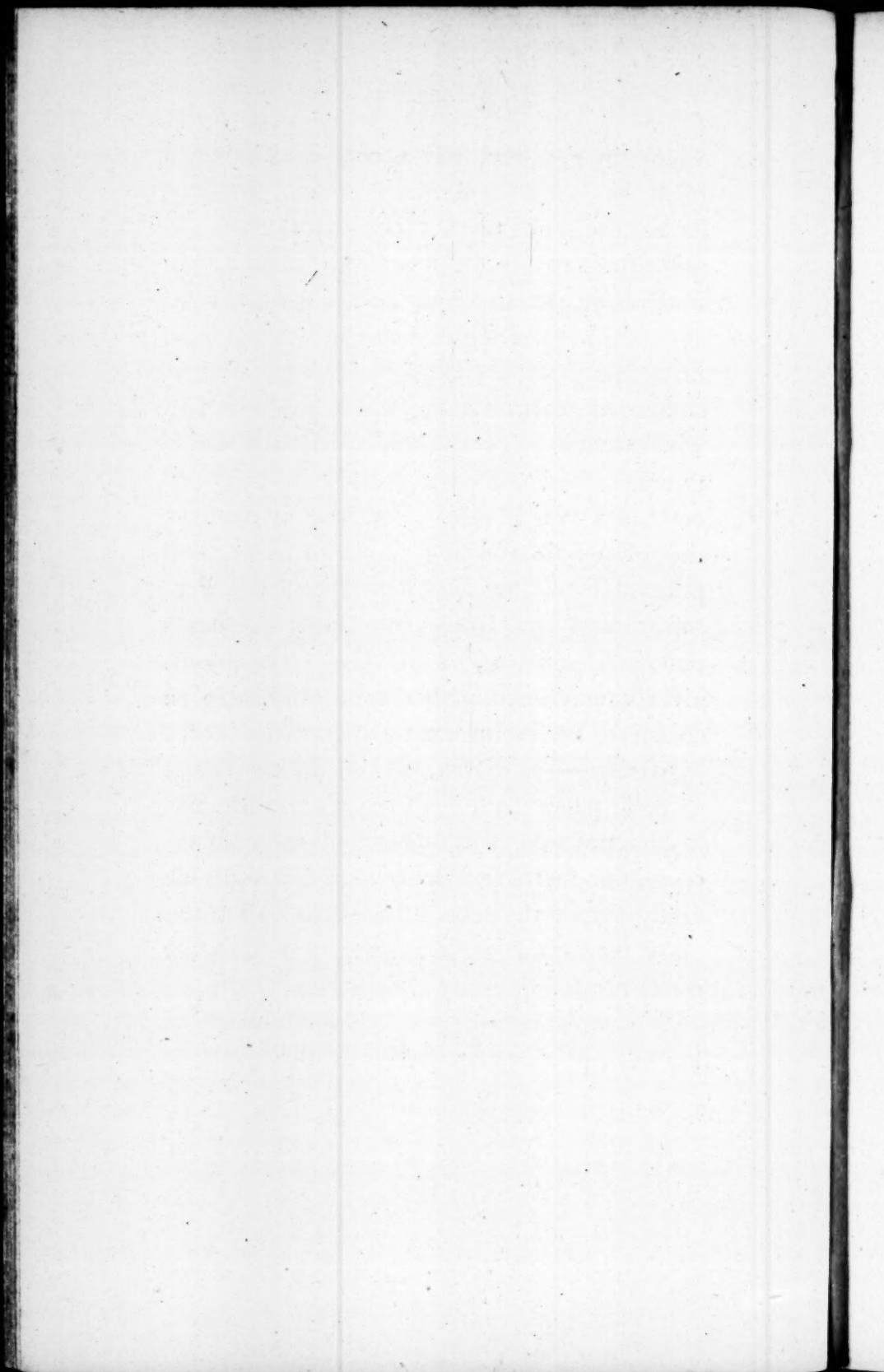
withstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained."

To a character so amiable, so complacent, and so little tinctured by that pedantry which always sticks to an affected philosopher, *who*, that hath any sense of agreeable qualities, will
 ever

ever bring near him such a frivolous compound of whim, wickedness, cunning, and congee, as Lord Chesterfield; unless, indeed, he is brought forward by way of contrast. There appears likewise to me, to have been as wide a difference in the size of their abilities, as there was in the honesty of their principles: every page in those Letters, which have laid open his Lordship's hypocrisy, furnishes us with examples of his futility: it would be the drudgery of a day to detect a single light sentence in Hume. The Earl of Chesterfield's utmost stretch of penetration, amounts to little more than shrewdness, partly caught from the suggestions of a mind naturally suspicious, and partly from observations upon the weaknesses, and tender imperfections of men less capable to dissemble. This faculty, is at best, but a principal ingredient in the character of a *cunning* fellow, who, as it were, by imperceptible slight of hand, hath the art of appearing what he is not; and of cheating you, with singular dexterity, even before your face.

But all the fame, or popular etiquette that could possibly arise from such practices, Hume would have discarded with disdain, And, chiefly, for two reasons: first, his genius had not a single grain of the *petit maitre* in it, which

which, by the way, was a considerable ingredient in Lord Chesterfield's; and, secondly, he had too much dignity in his nature, and too just a sense of the social compact between the individual, and the whole human race, to find any zest in gratifications, which emanated from neither more nor less flagrant treachery. Hence it appears obvious enough, that the Earl of Chesterfield's heart and head were both unable to bear any sort of parallel with the head and heart of David Hume. The one is the Author of a system which seems to have been pillaged from the Dancing-master, the Perfumer, and the Devil: the other pursues a philosophy, which, with all its exceptions, gives countenance neither to the follies of a coxcomb, nor the meanness and mischief of a hypocrite—a wretch, which, in the course of these pages hath been marked with singular reprobation; and above all other hypocrites, one that, in a kind of moral masquerade dress, perpetrates every baseness, and passes upon the world as a *mighty good Christian creature*.



SECTION IV.

THE public will judge of the *propriety* and *impartiality* of the foregoing comparison. Lord Chesterfield never pretended to be a moral philosopher; how far, then, comparing men of such opposite principles, tastes, and tempers was proper, is left to the sensible reader. But as unfavourable ideas of our *noble author*, may be formed from the above, as well as from some late strictures, on what is termed “the loose part of his letters to his son,” I cannot in justice to his character, but give the following just observation made upon it.

The *mental abilities* of Lord Chesterfield have never been brought into question, for

all have allowed the keenness of his wit, and the soundness of his understanding; but many on the evidence of a single fact have condemned his principles, as unfavourable to the true interests of religion, honour, and virtue: His morals have been execrated, purely on the ground of accusation afforded by some of those private letters to Mr. Stanhope, which ought not to have been made public. Had these never seen the light, his Lordship's fame had, perhaps, never suffered any impeachment; and his memory might have been transmitted to posterity, with that applause and admiration, which we see paid to the Montagues, the Boyles, the Sackvilles, the Sheffields, and the Granvilles, who now repose on their laurels, unmolested by the fangs of envy, or the shafts of the censorious.

In public stations, (particularly in Ireland) Lord Chesterfield's conduct ever met with deserved plaudits; in private life, his brilliant wit, his exquisite humour, and his invariable politeness, rendered him the constant delight of his friends;—and in the tender domestic relations, he was not only irreproachable, but exemplary. In fine, a more amiable man
scarce

scarce ever graced a court, or adorned the peaceful scenes of retirement.

With respect to that exceptionable part of his conduct,—his failure as a preceptor, little can be said in his defence, but let that little be heard.

A father so desirous that his son should answer in every respect, the model of perfection he had sketched out to himself, must have been much mortified, on finding himself frustrated in his unwearied endeavours to polish and refine his manners.—The fertility of his genius in expedients to inspire Mr. Stanhope with the *desire of pleasing*, is not any where more conspicuous than in this part of his letters.* Finding the disorder obstinate, he had recourse to more desperate remedies; as *empirics* too frequently administer poison in their vain attempts to subdue unconquerable maladies, or to cure diseases less dangerous, than those which their inconsiderate practice entails upon their patients.

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* We allude to those written when the young gentleman was arrived at the age of nineteen; a time of life when the utmost exertions of good breeding would be expected.

Far be it from me to endeavour to conceal, or excuse the luxuriances of a warm imagination. Vice can at no time, and under no pretence, become any part of a rational education; nor would it be sufficient to say, that the manners of great cities, especially Paris, have in some degree *authorized polite gallantry*. In vain also would it be urged, that Lord Chesterfield, knowing, perhaps, by his own experience, with how much difficulty certain passions are resisted in youth, might have thought there was no other choice but that of *coarse debauchery*, and sentimental engagements, or that the latter depending, sometimes, on a fine address, (or being possessed of the graces) might stimulate his pupil to excel this way.

It might further be said, that when mutual liberty is allowed, in what is called in Paris, the married state, chastity can no more be expected on one side, than fidelity on the other; nor can the crime of corruption well be charged where general depravity prevails.

But we rest not the defence of Lord Chesterfield on such weak foundations: Drawing a
veil,

veil, therefore, on this part of his conduct, which was not intended, and ought not to have been exposed to the public eye, we must be content with deploring the weakness of human nature, which hitherto never admitted of perfection.

SECTION . V.

A Portrait of Lord Chesterfield.

HIS character is generally well understood—It is agreed on all hands, that he was a discreet Clodius ;—a sober Duke of Whar-ton, —born with inferiour abilities to those which distinguish that unfortunate nobleman, but with the same passion for universal admiration, he was master of more prudence and discretion.

He formed himself very early to make a distinguished figure in the state. Impelled by his ruling passion, he applied himself assiduously to studies which might render him an accomplished speaker, an *able* negotiator,

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a counsellor in the cabinet; — to sum up all, one equal to any civil employment. There cannot be a doubt that he aimed at acquiring the office of prime minister; or at least the power of appointing the person whom he approved to that post.—But the superiour abilities of Walpole disappointed his ambition.

His situation was flattering:—When young he was placed about the person of *George the Second*, when prince of Wales; he did not reflect that those who are in the most elevated station have no idea of friendship independent of a most implicit, not to say abject resignation to their will. His marriage with the Duchess of Kendal's niece, so far from advancing his interest at court, occasioned a litigation between him and his sovereign.

He understood what is called the balance of Europe, or the several interests and claims of its princes, perfectly. This science, with his polished address, qualified him to be one of the ablest negociators of his time. He made himself acquainted with the characters of all the great men in the several courts of Europe; he knew their intrigues,—their attachments,

tachments, their foibles; and was enabled from thence to counteract all their political machinations.

I am persuaded that his being sent on his first embassy to Holland, was rather an honourable exile, than a mark of favour: He would, in all probability have been troublesome at home—*Walpole* did not envy him the honour of shining among the Dutch, and eclipsing a French envoy by superior adroitness.

As a speaker, he is justly celebrated for a certain accuracy, as well as brilliancy of style; for pointed wit, gay humour, and sportive facetiousness. However, his admirers must confess, that he never could reach the sublime in oratory.—He frequently strove to disarm his adversaries by the most profuse commendation of their abilities; but what is certainly very reprehensible in him, while he bestowed unlimited commendations on the ministers whom he opposed, he threw out the most stinging reflections on the prince, as if he had forgotten that the servants of the crown are alone accountable for errors in government.

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The most applauded, as well as unexceptionable part of his public character, was his administration in Ireland. As a Viceroy he shone with great lustre, and was universally approved; perhaps he was indebted to this singular good fortune for his being called to the office of secretary of state, at the expiration of his first year's government of that kingdom.

In private life, we should naturally pronounce a Chesterfield the most satisfied of all men: Easy, gay, polite, and master of his passions, what could such a man want to render his happiness complete? The same passion for admiration which actuated him in public, accompanied him through every walk of life.

Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke;

The club must hail him master of the joke.

When he had reached one goal, he planned for another—He aimed at universality of character: He wished to be destined the patron of learned men, but wanted generosity of soul to merit that title.

He espoused and patronized a great genius of the age, who addressed an admirable *plan* of his *Dictionary* to him; but the capriciousness and instability of his mind, prevented his gaining that honour he most ardently wished for,—a dedication of the work itself.—A Letter written to him on that memorable occasion by the author, who despised his meanness, and disdained to gratify his vanity, will live for ever in the memory of those who have been favoured with the recital of it.

It is impossible to reconcile to any principles of *reason and morality* the shocking advice which he gave his son, viz. “to treat all women alike, and to suppose them all equally liable to seduction.”—Was then his Lordship so successful a lover?—Was his address so formidable, that no lady could resist him?—His Lordship, I am afraid was not wholly free from affectation.—Great wits, and men who court applause from all the world, are not generally the most passionate lovers.

Prior's Chloe was a poetical and ideal character,—*Poor Pope* was immoderately and ostentatiously

tentatiously fond of Patty Blount;—*Swift* after having admired and courted the celebrated *Stella* near twenty years, married her, and was afterwards never in her company but when a third person was present !

I would not insinuate that his Lordship was so cold a lover as *Swift*; nor do I imagine him to be the libertine he wishes to pass for. — Like Lord Foppington in the play, he might think the *reputation* of an *amour* with a fine woman, the most delicious part of the business. I never heard of any of his Lordship's successful gallantries, except that which brought Mr. Stanhope into the world. His contempt of the sex might possibly arise, from their dislike and aversion to him.

Thus have I given the character drawn of Lord Chesterfield; in which are *excellencies*, *beauties*, *defects* and *blemishes*.

In Ireland they experienced (at a most critical conjuncture) his Lordship's *wisdom*, *moderation*, and *disinterestedness*, when in the plenitude of power. — That he was possessed of *great abilities*, and *eminent merit*, in many respects,

spects, cannot be controverted—This just remark, is a *free will offering* paid to *departed worth*, or an assemblage of amiable, agreeable qualities, joined to the most shining accomplishments.

SECTION VI.

The CONCLUSION.

THE above *selections*, and *occasional observations*, will, it is hoped, be favourably received. The editor has endeavoured to present to the public, a pleasing and profitable entertainment, in a small compass, considering the variety, or number of important particulars introduced. Whatever relates to such distinguished characters as Lord Chesterfield, and Mr. Hume, cannot but claim attention from persons of *taste*, and a *laudable curiosity*.

After what has been said by *Hume's* advocates, particularly, by the *apologist* for his life and writings, it were wrong not to remark on some sentiments that have been thrown out, with an *air of triumph* by that writer.

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He says, “ perhaps it is one of the very worst circumstances against the *cause* of *christianity*, that very few of its professors were ever either so moral, so humane, or could so philosophically govern their passions, as the sceptical David Hume.

It is admitted that the lives of too many who think themselves christians, are vicious and immoral, a disgrace to their profession, a reproach to humanity. I will also admit Mr. Hume to have had, a virtuous, philosophic mind.

But surely christianity ought not to be blamed for the profligacy of its professors. It were as unjust to declaim against the *beauty* and *excellence* of our *civil constitution*, because it hath been so frequently *violated* by the *venal*, and the *wicked*. Christianity gives not shelter to any sin; but on the contrary, hath set the precepts and example of its divine founder against all iniquity,—as well as the pains of the world to come.—If its votaries are not *pure*, *self-denied*, *meek*, *humble*, *pious* and *benevolent*, it is not the fault of their religion; because, for sublimity of precepts and doctrines, unadulterated christianity will ever stand unrivalled.

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But that very few of its professors, “ were ever, either so *moral*, so *humane*, or could so *philosophically* govern their passions as Mr. Hume,” I deny.—Tho’ *clerical characters* may, probably, appear most exceptionable to the author of this unjust remark, yet the very respectable names of *Leighton, Barrow, Whichcot, Tillotson, Cudworth, Burnet, Clarke, Hoadley, Butler, Middleton, Clayton, Berkley, Young, Sherlock, Secker — Foster, Chandler, Duchal — Abernethy, Watts, Leland*, and others that might be named, fully evince the contrary.—Several of these were remarkable for *self government*, for an *equanimity of temper*, effected by *moral discipline*; all of them were men of abilities, and distinguished by eminent virtue:—Nor is there one of them, whose life was not as pure, and, perhaps, more *useful* than Mr. Hume’s.

But our catalogue of *christian worthies* need not be confined to the *clerical order*. The list of *statesmen, patriots*, and *philosophers* that have adorned our annals, likewise contradict so vague an assertion. When we speak of Sir *Matthew Hale*, Sir *Thomas More*, of *Milton*, *Sydney*, *Locke*, *Newton*, *Boyle*, *Adairson*, *Hutcheson*,—with certain cotemporaries of the two last, and *Lord Lyttleton*;—we shall see in

some of these, that both Mr. Hume's *virtues* and *abilities*, more than equalled.

The LATTER END of most of the names above-mentioned, was so peaceful, so full of hope, so nobly supported by a *consciousness* to *past rectitude* of life, and at the same time, marked by such sublime sentiments; — that when we *contrast their last scene*, to Mr. Hume's not having an *excuse* to give *Charon*, which indeed shewed much serenity of mind) a great superiority appears. The entertainment derived from *Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead*, was but cold and insipid at such an hour, compared to the elevated strains of devotion which fell from those who did honour to the christian name.

It were indelicate to speak of living characters, or numbers would swell the recital, as *moral*, and *humane* as Mr. Hume. But if we look back to the *first reformers*, or days of *persecution*, when *truth* stood in need of support from its votaries; — should we bring into this account those christian heroes and martyrs, who animated by virtuous resolution, suffered, and bled in the noblest of all causes, — a glorious cloud of witnesses in our favour would appear.

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The magnimity, and greatness of mind that distinguished many of these when persecuted, and put to death for righteousness sake, cannot but command our admiration!—I shall not say, whether Mr. Hume would have shewn as much firmness in defence of his most favourite tenets; but he has, I believe, never made any *expensive sacrifices on the altar of truth and liberty*, consequently not to be set in competition with *tried, triumphant integrity*.

The *calm retreats of philosophic ease*, call not forth the *heroic virtues*. In such retirements (sometimes devoted to sceptical disquisitions) temptations to defection, have been, comparatively, but few; nor can individuals of this sort much boast of having exhibited to the world, many instances of persevering fortitude under persecuting trials, or of having met the *King of Terrors*, in his most awful appearances with that *generous contempt*, or *surprising resolution* which marked the exits of many christian martyrs even at the *stake*, or when the *flames* had laid hold on them!

However moral and humane Mr. Hume may have been, (his merit is not controverted) yet his admirers ought not to celebrate his virtue

tue at the *expence* of the christian character, (which we have seen is elevated) or, as if good *morals*, and *deism*, had before been strangers!—Such triumph on account of goodness and humanity in a *sceptical individual*, would seem to mark a deficiency in eminent worth among those of that cast.

Be this as it may, certain it is, that Mr. Hume's propositions, respecting CAUSE and EFFECT, would, if pursued in their consequences, terminate nearly in atheism: This hath been the opinion of wise and good men. It is needless to say, how such tenets tend to *loosen moral obligation*, consequently to destroy the most *essential interests* of society.—It is, therefore, with caution, that the young and unthinking should hear men of such principles, praised, or set above those eminent professors of christianity, to which honour, I trust, it now appears they have not a just claim.

Licentiousness in principle, has generally lead to *libertinism* in practice, and I will assert, “that the man who is bound by the *awful sanctions* of religion, may be most depended on;” he bids fairest for being the honest trader, the good neighbour, and citizen, the sincere friend, and
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steadfast lover of his country ; or for discharging in a becoming manner, all the duties of civil and social life. Nay, I know not, whether it would be a breach of charity to say, “ that *doubters* or *unbelievers*, have seldom been eminent for *purity of manners*, *disinterested beneficence*, exalted piety, or for true magnanimity mind.

It is not to persons of this description, that truth and liberty ; the civil and religious rights of mankind ; arts, sciences and philosophy ; the peace and happiness of mens minds ; or their advancement in useful knowledge, substantial piety, and generous virtue, stand eminently indebted.

On the contrary, many of them, have been the most *superficial*, *bigotted*, and *narrow minded* of *mortals* ; — *covetous profligate*, *impious* ! under a pretence of greater freedom of thought than others, they have been known to take liberties inconsistent with *decency and good manners*, or have openly attempted, by the *coarsest buffoonery*, to throw the most venerable things into contempt. It were unnecessary to add, that *calmness* and *true fortitude* of spirit, are not likely to be the death bed attendants on such men,

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These particulars will, it is hoped, shew the *futility*, as well as falsehood of the assertion we have been controverting, viz. "That, perhaps, it is one of the very worst circumstances against the cause of christianity, that very few of its professors were ever, either so moral, so humane, or could so philosophically govern their passions, as the sceptical David Hume."—A proposition, which if true, would not a little derogate from the dignity and importance of the christian cause and character.

But, surely, we need not rest our *moral defence* entirely on the lives of eminent divines, philosophers, &c. as before named:—Have we not seen in common life, numerous instances of *true greatness* and *heroism*;—a contempt of the world, and discipline of the passions inspired by christianity. Hath not this divine philosophy, made the naturally *wrathful* and *proud*,—*meek* and *humble*;—the avaricious, generous; the intemperate, sober; the profane and profligate, pure and pious!

I cannot resist concluding these remarks, in the words of a justly admired writer. "To see a person (says he) of no more than common understanding, a stranger to all science
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in religious matters, but what is derived from the holy scriptures, by virtue of this discipline only, acting his part in life so as with happy success to serve the great purposes of it;—to see him maintaining an amiable purity of manners and decency of behaviour, abounding in the just and natural expressions of devotion towards God, in the fruits of righteousness and charity towards mankind; to see him studiously endeavouring to adorn every station in life by the practice of those virtues, which are suited to it; making it his first care to approve himself to God, and his own conscience, resolved and firm in resisting temptations to evil, and in maintaining his integrity at any expence; labouring daily to correct what is amiss in his temper; despising all sensual pleasures and temporal possessions, when compared with virtue and religion, with the favour of his Maker, and the hope of an happy immortality.”

To see a person so formed, going through life most reputably, and usefully; appearing uniform and like himself in all the changes of it;—to see him at *last meet death*, with undisturbed tranquillity of spirit,—possibly with desire and joy, must, one would think, in an

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attentive observer, beget very *favourable sentiments* concerning a religion, by means of which all these virtues are carried to so eminent a degree :—One would indeed wonder if any good man should be an adversary to it.

✎ After this pamphlet had been written, the Editor—(to his surprise) found, that the author of the *Apology for the life and writings of David Hume*, who hath thrown out such unmerited, false accusations against the advocates for christianity is no other than Courtney Melmoth, Esq; author also of a book lately published, entitled “ *The Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture* ;”—in which he says, “ I shall account myself singularly fortunate, if such endeavours have in any degree, done a service to compositions which are so able to support the trial.”

The inconsistency and contradictions which so strongly mark the writings of this declamatory publisher, in the two productions above-mentioned, would seem deeply to *affect* his *sincerity*, or lay him open to be *taxed* with that *hypocrisy*, of which, he would insinuate, the *friends of revealed religion*, stand chargeable.

This remark cannot be deemed uncandid, as it immediately respects a writer, who has opened a *masked battery* against his own *works* !

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THE Editor of this Collection, in order to present Readers with the greater Variety of elegant Entertainment, has added the late LORD CHESTERFIELD's celebrated Speech against LICENSING the STAGE.

Likewise, his ironical Petition for a Pension, which is strongly marked by genuine Wit and true Humour.



THE

Earl of CHESTERFIELD'S SPEECH

AGAINST

LICENSING the STAGE.

MY LORDS,

THE Bill now before you I apprehend to be of a very extraordinary, a very dangerous nature. It seems designed not only as a restraint on the licentiousness of the Stage, but it will prove a most arbitrary restraint on the liberty of the Stage; and, I fear, it looks yet farther; I fear, it tends towards a restraint on the liberty of the Press, which will be a long stride towards the destruction of liberty itself. It is not only a Bill, my Lords, of a very extraordinary nature, but it has been brought in at a very extraordinary season, and pushed with

with most extraordinary dispatch. When I consider how near it was to the end of the session, and how long this session had been protracted beyond the usual time of the year; when I considered that this Bill passed through the other House with so much precipitancy, as even to get the start of a Bill which deserved all the respect, and all the dispatch, the forms of either House of Parliament could admit of, it set me upon enquiring, what could be the reason for introducing this Bill at so unseasonable a time, and pressing it forward in a manner so very singular and uncommon. I have made all possible inquiry, and as yet, I must confess, I am at a loss to find out the great occasion. I have, it is true, learned from common report without doors, that a most seditious, a most heinous farce had been offered to one of the theatres, a farce for which the authors ought to be punished in the most exemplary manner: But what was the consequence? the master of that theatre behaved as he was in duty bound, and as common prudence directed: He not only refused to bring it upon the Stage, but carried it to a certain Honourable Gentleman in the Administration, as the surest method of having it absolutely suppressed. Could this be the occasion of introducing such an extraordinary Bill,

Bill, at such an extraordinary season, and pushing it in so extraordinary a manner? Surely no;—the dutiful behaviour of the players, the prudent caution they shewed upon that occasion, can never be a reason for subjecting them to such an arbitrary restraint: It is an argument in their favour, and a material one, in my opinion, against the Bill. Nay farther, if we consider all circumstances, it is to me a full proof that the laws now in being are sufficient for punishing those players who shall venture to bring any seditious libel upon the Stage, and consequently sufficient for deterring all players from acting any thing that may have the least tendency towards giving a reasonable offence.

I do not, my Lords, pretend to be a lawyer, I do not pretend to know perfectly the power and extent of our laws, but I have conversed with those that do, and by them I have been told, that our laws are sufficient for punishing any person that shall dare to represent upon the Stage what may appear, either by the words or the representation, to be blasphemous, seditious, or immoral. I must own, indeed, I have observed of late a remarkable licentiousness in the Stage. There have but very lately been two plays acted, which, one
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would have thought, should have given the greatest offence, and yet both were suffered to be often represented without disturbance, without censure. In one, the author thought fit to represent the three great professions, Religion, Physic, and the Law, as inconsistent with common sense: In the other, a most tragical story was brought upon the stage, a catastrophe too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a nature, to be heard of any where but from the pulpit. How these pieces came to pass unpunished, I do not know: If I am rightly informed, it was not for want of law, but for want of prosecution, without which no law can be made effectual: But if there was any neglect in this case, I am convinced it was not with a design to prepare the minds of the people, and to make them think a new law necessary.

Our Stage ought certainly, my Lords, to be kept within bounds; but for this, our laws as they stand at present are sufficient: If our stage-players at any time exceed those bounds, they ought to be prosecuted, they may be punished: We have precedents, we have examples of persons having been punished for things less criminal than either of the two pieces I have mentioned. A new law must therefore

therefore be unnecessary, and in the present case it cannot be unnecessary without being dangerous: Every unnecessary restraint on licentiousness is a fetter upon the legs, is a shackle upon the hands of liberty. One of the greatest blessings we enjoy, one of the greatest blessings a people, my Lords, can enjoy, is liberty;—but every good in this life has its alloy of evil:—Licentiousness is the alloy of liberty; it is an ebullition, an excrescence;—it is a speck upon the eye of the political body, which I can never touch but with a gentle,—with a trembling hand, lest I destroy the body, lest I injure the eye upon which it is apt to appear. If the Stage becomes at any time licentious; if a play appears to be a libel upon the government, or upon any particular man, the king's courts are open, the laws are sufficient for punishing the offender; and in this case the person injured has a singular advantage; he can be under no difficulty to prove who is the publisher; the players themselves are the publishers, and there can be no want of evidence to convict them.

But, my Lords, suppose it true, that the laws now in being are not sufficient for putting a check to or preventing the licentiousness of the Stage: suppose it absolutely necessary some

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new law should be made for that purpose; yet it must be granted that such a law ought to be maturely considered, and every clause, every sentence, nay every word of it well weighed and examined, lest under some of those methods, presumed or pretended to be necessary for restraining licentiousness, a power should lie concealed, which might be afterwards made use of for giving a dangerous wound to liberty. Such a law ought not to be introduced at the close of a session, nor ought we, in the passing of such a law, to depart from any of the forms prescribed by our ancestors for preventing deceit and surprize. There is such a connection between licentiousness and liberty, that it is not easy to correct the one, without dangerously wounding the other: It is extremely hard to distinguish the true limit between them: like a changeable silk, we can easily see there are two different colours, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends, or where the other begins.—There can be no great and immediate danger from the licentiousness of the stage: I hope it will not be pretended that our government may, before next winter, be overturned by such licentiousness, even though our Stage were at present under no sort of legal controul. Why then may we not delay till next session passing any law
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against the licentiousness of the Stage? Neither our government can be altered, nor our constitution overturned by such a delay; but by passing a law rashly and unadvisedly, our constitution may at once be destroyed, and our government rendered arbitrary. Can we then put a small, a short-lived inconvenience in the balance with perpetual slavery? Can it be supposed that a parliament of *Great Britain* will so much as risque the latter, for the sake of avoiding the former?

Surely, my Lords, this is not to be expected, were the licentiousness of the stage much greater than it is, were the insufficiency of our laws more obvious than can be pretended; but when we complain of the licentiousness of the Stage, and of the insufficiency of our laws, I fear we have more reason to complain of bad measures in our polity, and a general decay of virtue and morality among the people. In public as well as private life, the only way to prevent being ridiculed or censured, is to avoid all ridiculous or wicked measures, and to pursue such only as are virtuous and worthy. The people never endeavour to ridicule those they love and esteem, nor will they suffer them to be ridiculed: If any one attempts it, the ridicule

returns upon the author: he makes himself only the object of public hatred and contempt. The actions or behaviour of a private man may pass unobserved, and consequently unapplauded, uncensured; but the actions of those in high stations, can neither pass without notice, nor without censure or applause; and therefore an administration without esteem, without authority among the people, let their power be ever so great, let their power be ever so arbitrary, they will be ridiculed: The severest edicts, the most terrible punishments, cannot entirely prevent it. If any man therefore thinks he has been censured; if any man thinks he has been ridiculed upon any of our public theatres, let him examine his actions he will find the cause, let him alter his conduct he will find a remedy. As no man is perfect, as no man is infallible, the greatest may err, the most circumspect may be guilty of some piece of ridiculous behaviour. It is not licentiousness, it is an useful liberty always indulged the Stage in a free country, that some great men may there meet with a just reproof, which none of their friends will be free enough or rather faithful enough to give them. Of this we have a famous instance in the *Roman* history. The great *Pompey*,
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after the many victories he had obtained, and the great conquests he had made, had certainly a good title to the esteem of the people of *Rome*; yet that great man, by some error in his conduct, became an object of general dislike; and therefore, in the representation of an old play, when *Diphilus*, the actor, came to repeat these words, *Nostra Miseria tu es Magnus*, the audience immediately applied them to *Pompey*, who at that time was as well known by the name *Magnus*, as by the name *Pompey*, and were so highly pleased with the satire, that, as *Cicero* says, they made the actor repeat the words an hundred times over: An account of this was immediately sent to *Pompey*, who, instead of resenting it as an injury, was so wise as to take it for a just reproof: He examined his conduct, he altered his measures, he regained by degrees the esteem of the people, and then he neither feared the wit, nor felt the satire of the Stage. This is an example which ought to be followed by great men in all countries. Such accidents will often happen in every free country, and many such would probably have afterwards happened at *Rome*, if they had continued to enjoy their liberty; but this sort of liberty in the Stage, came soon after, I suppose, to be called licentiousness;
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for we are told that *Augustus*, after having established his Empire, restored order to *Rome* by restraining licentiousness. God forbid! we should in this country have order restored, or licentiousness restrained, at so dear a rate as the people of *Rome* paid for it to *Augustus*.

In the case I have mentioned, my Lords, it was not the poet that wrote, for it was an old play, nor the players that acted, for they only repeated the words of the play; it was the people who pointed the satire; and the case will always be the same: When a man has the misfortune to incur the hatred or contempt of the people, when public measures are despised, the audience will apply what never was, what could not be designed as a satire on the present times. Nay, even though the people should not apply, those who are conscious of guilt, those who are conscious of the wickedness or weakness of their own conduct, will take to themselves what the author never designed. A public thief is as apt to take the satire as he is apt to take the money, which was never designed for him. We have an instance of this in the case of a famous comedian of the last age; a comedian who was not only a good poet, but an honest man, and a quiet
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and good subject : The famous *Moliere* when he wrote his *Tartuffe*, which is certainly an excellent and a good moral comedy, did not design to satirize any great man of that age ; yet a great man in *France* at that time took it to himself, and fancied the author had taken him as a model for one of the principal and one of the worst characters in that comedy : By good luck he was not the licenser, otherwise the kingdom of *France* had never had the pleasure, the happiness, I may say, of seeing that play acted ; but when the players first proposed to act it at *Paris*, he had interest enough to get it forbid. *Moliere*, who knew himself innocent of what was laid to his charge, complained to his patron the Prince of *Conti*, that as his play was designed only to expose hypocrisy, and a false pretence to religion, it was very hard it should be forbid being acted, when at the same time they were suffered to expose religion itself every night publicly upon the *Italian* stage. To which the Prince wittily answered, 'Tis true, *Moliere*, *Harlequin* ridicules Heaven, and exposes Religion ; but you have done much worse — you have ridiculed the first Minister of Religion.

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I am as much for restraining the licentiousness of the Stage, and every other sort of licentiousness, as any of your Lordships can be; but, my Lords, I am, I shall always be extremely cautious and fearful of making the least encroachment upon liberty; and therefore, when a new law is proposed against licentiousness, I shall always be for considering it deliberately and maturely, before I venture to give my consent to its being passed. This is a sufficient reason for my being against passing this Bill at so unseasonable a time, and in so extraordinary a manner; but I have my reasons for being against the Bill itself, some of which I shall beg leave to explain to your Lordships. The Bill, my Lords, at first view, may seem to be designed only against the Stage, but to me it plainly appears to point somewhere else. It is an arrow that does but glance upon the Stage, the mortal wound seems designed against the liberty of the press. By this Bill you prevent a play being acted, but you do not prevent its being printed; therefore, if a licence should be refused for its being acted, we may depend on it the play will be printed. It will be printed and published, my Lords, with the refusal in capital letters on the title page. People are always fond of what is forbidden. *Libri pro-*

bibiti are in all countries diligently and generally sought after. It will be much easier to procure a refusal, than it ever was to procure a good house, or a good sale: Therefore we may expect, that plays will be wrote on purpose to have a refusal: This will certainly procure a good sale: Thus will satires be spread and dispersed through the whole nation, and thus every man in the kingdom may and probably will, read for sixpence, what a few only could have seen acted and that not under the expence of half a crown. We shall then be told, What! Will you allow an infamous libel to be printed and dispersed, which you would not allow to be acted? You have agreed to a law for preventing its being acted, can you refuse your assent to a law for preventing its being printed and published? I should really my Lords, be glad to hear what excuse, what reason one could give for being against the latter, after having agreed to the former; for, I protest I cannot suggest to myself the least shadow of an excuse. If we agree to the Bill now before us, we must perhaps next session, agree to a Bill for preventing any play being printed without a licence. Then satires will be wrote by way of novels, secret histories, dialogues, or under some such title; and thereupon we shall

be told, What! Will you allow an infamous libel to be printed and dispersed, only because it does not bear the title of a play? Thus, my Lords, from the precedent now before us, we shall be induced, nay we can find no reason for refusing to lay the press under a general licence, and then we may bid adieu to the liberties of *Great Britain*.

But suppose, my Lords, it were necessary to make a new law for the restraining the licentiousness of the Stage, which I am very far from granting, yet I shall never be for establishing such a power as is proposed by this Bill. If poets and players are to be restrained, let them be restrained as other subjects are, by the known laws of their country; if they offend, let them be tried as every *Englishman* ought to be, by God and their country. Do not let us subject them to the arbitrary will and pleasure of any one man. A power lodged in the hands of one single man, to judge and determine, without any limitation, without any controul or appeal, is a sort of power unknown to our laws, inconsistent with our constitution. It is a higher, a more absolute power than we trust even to the King himself; and therefore I must think, we ought not to vest any such power in his Majesty's
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Lord Chamberlain. When I say this, I am sure I do not mean to give the least, the most distant offence to the noble Duke who now fills the post of Lord Chamberlain: His natural candour and love of justice, would not, I know, permit him to exercise any power but with the strictest regard to the rules of justice and humanity. Were we sure his successors in that high office would always be persons of such distinguished merit, even the power to be established by this Bill could give me no farther alarm, than lest it should be made a precedent for introducing other new powers of the same nature. This, indeed, is an alarm which cannot be avoided, which cannot be prevented by any hope, by any consideration; it is an alarm which, I think, every man must take, who has a due regard to the constitution and liberties of his country.

I shall admit, my Lords, that the Stage ought not upon any occasion to meddle with politics, and for this very reason, among the rest, I am against the Bill now before us: This Bill will be so far from preventing the Stage's meddling with politics, that I fear it will be the occasion of its meddling with nothing else; but then it will be a political Stage *ex parte*. It will be made subservient to the

politics and schemes of the court only. The licentiousness of the Stage will be encouraged instead of being restrained; but, like court-journalists, it will be licentious only against the patrons of liberty, and the protectors of the people. Whatever man, whatever party opposes the court in any of their most destructive schemes, will, upon the Stage, be represented in the most ridiculous light the hirelings of a court can contrive. True patriotism and love of public good will be represented as madness, or as a cloak for envy, disappointment and malice; while the most flagitious crimes, the most extravagant vices and follies, if they are fashionable at court, will be disguised and dressed up in the habit of the most amiable virtues. This has formerly been the case:—In King *Charles II*'s days the play-house was under a licence. What was the consequence?—The play-house retailed nothing but the politics, the vices, and the follies of the court: Not to expose them; no—but to recommend them; though it must be granted their politics were often as bad as their vices, and much more pernicious than their other follies. It is true, the court had, at that time, a great deal of wit; it was then indeed full of men of true wit and great humour; but

it was the more dangerous; for the courtiers did then, as thorough-paced courtiers always will do, they sacrificed their honour, by making their wit and their humour subservient to the court only; and what made it still appear more dangerous, no man could appear upon the stage against them. We know that *Dryden*, the Poet Laureat of that reign, always represents the cavaliers as honest, brave, merry fellows, and fine gentlemen: Indeed, his fine gentleman, as he generally draws him, is an atheistical, lewd, abandoned fellow, which was at that time, it seems, the fashionable character at court. On the other hand, he always represents the dissenters as hypocritical, dissembling rogues, or stupid senseless boobies. — When the court had a mind to fall out with the *Dutch*, he wrote his *Amboyna*, in which he represents the *Dutch* as a pack of avaritious, cruel, ungrateful rascals. — And when the Exclusion Bill was moved in parliament, he wrote his *Duke of Guise*, in which those who were for preserving and securing the religion of their country, were exposed under the character of the Duke of *Guise* and his party, who leagued together, for excluding *Henry IV.* of *France* from the throne, on account of his religion. — The city of *London* too, was made to feel the partial and mercenary licentiousness
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of the Stage at that time; for the citizens, having at that time, as well as now, a great deal of property, they had a mind to preserve that property, and therefore they opposed some of the arbitrary measures which were then begun, but pursued more openly in the following reign; for which reason they were then always represented upon the Stage, as a parcel of designing knaves, dissembling hypocrites, griping usurers, and——cuckolds into the bargain.

My Lords, the proper business of the Stage, and that for which only it is useful, is to expose those vices and follies, which the laws cannot lay hold of, and to recommend those beauties and virtues, which ministers and courtiers seldom either imitate or reward; but by laying it under a licence, and under an arbitrary court-licence too, you will, in my opinion, intirely pervert its use; for though I have the greatest esteem for that noble Duke, in whose hands this power is at present designed to fall, though I have an intire confidence in his judgment and impartiality; yet I may suppose that a leaning towards the fashions of a court is sometimes hard to be avoided. — It may be very difficult to make one who is every day at court believe that to be a vice or folly, which

which he sees daily practised by those he loves and esteems.—By custom even deformity itself becomes familiar, and at last agreeable.—To such a person, let his natural impartiality be ever so great, that may appear a libel against the court, which is only a most just and a most necessary satire upon the fashionable vices and follies of the court. Courtiers, my Lords, are too polite to reprove one another; the only place where they can meet with any just reproof, is a free, though not a licentious Stage; and as every sort of vice and folly, generally in all countries, begins at court, and from thence spreads through the country, by laying the Stage under an arbitrary court-licence, instead of leaving it what it is, and always ought to be, a gentle scourge for the vices of great men and courtiers, you will make it a canal for propagating and conveying their vices and follies through the whole kingdom.

From hence, my Lords, I think it must appear, that the Bill now before us cannot so properly be called a Bill for restraining the licentiousness, as it may be called a Bill for restraining the liberty of the Stage, and for restraining it too in that branch which in all countries has been the most useful; therefore I must look upon the Bill as a most dangerous encroach-

encroachment upon liberty in general. Nay farther, my Lords, it is not only an encroachment upon liberty, but it is likewise an encroachment on property. Wit, my Lords, is a sort of property: It is the property of those that have it, and too often the only property they have to depend on. It is, indeed, but a precarious dependance. Thank God! we, my Lords, have a dependance of another kind, we have a much less precarious support, and therefore, cannot feel the inconveniencies of the Bill now before us; but it is our duty to encourage and protect wit, whosoever's property it may be. Those gentlemen who have any such property, are all, I hope, our friends: Do not let us subject them to any unnecessary or arbitrary restraint. I must own, I cannot easily agree to the laying of any tax upon wit; but by this Bill it is to be heavily taxed, — it is to be excised; — for if this Bill passes, it cannot be retailed in a proper way without a permit; and the Lord Chamberlain is to have the honour of being chief gauger, supervisor, commissioner, judge and jury: But what is still more hard, though the poor author, the proprietor I should say, cannot perhaps dine till he has found out and agreed with a purchaser; yet before he can propose to seek for a purchaser, he must
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patiently submit to have his goods rummaged at their new excise-office, where they may be detained for fourteen days, and even then he may find them returned as prohibited goods, by which his chief and best market will be for ever shut against him; and that without any cause, without the least shadow of reason, either from the laws of his country, or the laws of the Stage.

These hardships, this hazard, which every gentleman will be exposed to who writes any thing for the Stage, must certainly prevent every man of a generous and free spirit from attempting any thing in that way; and as the Stage has always been the proper channel for wit and humour, therefore, my Lords, when I speak against this Bill, I must think I plead the cause of wit, I plead the cause of humour, I plead the cause of the *British* Stage, and of every gentleman of taste in the kingdom: But it is not, my Lords, for the sake of wit only; even for the sake of his Majesty's Lord Chamberlain, I must be against this Bill. The noble Duke who has now the honour to execute that office, has, I am sure, as little inclination to disoblige as any man; but if this Bill passes, he must disoblige, he may disoblige some of his most intimate

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friends. It is impossible to write a play, but some of the characters, or some of the satire, may be interpreted so as to point at some person or other, perhaps at some person in an eminent station: When it comes to be acted, the people will make the application, and the person against whom the application is made, will think himself injured, and will, at least privately, resent it: At present this resentment can be directed only against the author; but when an author's play appears with my Lord Chamberlain's passport, every such resentment will be turned from the author, and pointed directly against the Lord Chamberlain, who by his stamp made the piece current. What an unthankful office are we therefore by this Bill to put upon his Majesty's Lord Chamberlain! an office which can no way contribute to his honour or profit, and yet such a one as must necessarily gain him a great deal of ill will, and create him a number of enemies.

The last reason I shall trouble your Lordships with for my being against the Bill, is, that in my opinion, it will no way answer the end proposed: I mean the end openly proposed, and, I am sure, the only end which your Lordships propose. To prevent the act-
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ing of a play which has any tendency to blasphemy, immorality, sedition, or private scandal, can signify nothing, unless you can likewise prevent its being printed and published. On the contrary, if you prevent its being acted, and admit of its being printed and published, you will propagate the mischief: Your prohibition will prove a bellows which will blow up the fire you intend to extinguish. This Bill can therefore be of no use for preventing either the public or the private injury intended by such a play; and consequently can be of no manner of use, unless it be designed as a precedent, as a leading step towards another, for subjecting the Press likewise to a licenser. For such a wicked purpose it may, indeed, be of great use; and in that light, it may most properly be called a step towards arbitrary power.

Let us consider, my Lords, that arbitrary power has seldom or ever been introduced into any country at once. It must be introduced by slow degrees, and as it were step by step, lest the people should perceive its approach. The barriers and fences of the people's liberty must be plucked up one by one, and some plausible pretences must be

found for removing or hood-winking, one after another, those sentries who are posted by the constitution of every free country, for warning the people of their danger. When these preparatory steps are once made, the people may then, indeed, with regret see slavery and arbitrary power making long strides over their land, but it will then be too late to think of preventing or avoiding the impending ruin. The Stage, my Lords, and the Press, are two of our out-sentries; if we remove them, — if we hood-wink them, — if we throw them in fetters, — the enemy may surprize us. Therefore I must look upon the Bill now before us as a step, and a most necessary step too, for introducing arbitrary power into this kingdom: It is a step so necessary, that, if ever any future ambitious king, or guilty minister, should form to himself so wicked a design, he will have reason to thank us for having done so much of the work to his hand; but such thanks, or thanks from such a man, I am convinced every one of your Lordships would blush to receive, — and scorn to deserve*.

* By this Bill, which passed both houses, all copies of plays, farces, or any thing wrote in the dramatic way, are to lie

lie before his Grace the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's household for the time being, for his Grace's perusal and approbation, before they shall be exhibited on the Stage.

T O

The following are the names of the persons who have been
admitted to the office of the Secretary of the Board of
Education since the last meeting of the Board.

TO THE

KING's most Excellent MAJESTY.

The humble PETITION of PHILIP Earl
of CHESTERFIELD, Knight of the most noble
Order of the Garter.

SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioner, being rendered, by
deafness, as useless and insignificant as most
of his equals and cotemporaries are by nature,
hopes in common with them, to share your
Majesty's Royal favour and bounty; whereby
he may be enabled either to save or spend, as
he shall think proper, more than he can do at
present.

That your Petitioner, having had the honour
of serving your Majesty in several very lucrative
employments, seems thereby entitled to a lu-
crative retreat from business, and to enjoy *otium*

cum

cum dignitate ; that is, leifure and a large pension.

Your Petitioner humbly prefumes, that he has, at least, a common claim to fuch a pension : he has a vote in the moft august affembly in the world ; he has an estate that puts him above wanting it ; but he has, at the fame time (though he fays it) an elevation of fentiment, that makes him not only defire, but (pardon, dread Sir, an expreffion you are ufed to) *infift* upon it.

That your Petitioner is little apt, and always unwilling, to fpeak advantageoufly of himfelf ; but as, after all, fome juftice is due to one's-felf, as well as to others, he begs leave to represent, That his loyalty to your Majefty has always been unshaken, even in the worft of times ; That, particularly, in the late unnatural rebellion, when the Pretender advanced as far as Derby, at the head of, at leaft, three thousand undisciplined men, the flower of the Scottifh Nobility and Gentry, your Petitioner did not join him, as unquestionably he might have done, had he been fo inclined ; but, on the contrary, raifed fixteen companies, of one hundred men each, at the public expence, in fupport of your Majefty's undoubted right to the Imperial Crown.

Crown of these Realms; which distinguished proof of his loyalty is, to this hour, unrewarded.

Your Majesty's Petitioner is well aware, that your Civil List must necessarily be in a low and languid state, after the various, frequent, and profuse evacuations which it has of late years undergone; but, at the same time, he presumes to hope, that this argument, which seems not to have been made use of against any other person whatsoever, shall not, in this single case, be urged against him; and the less so, as he has good reasons to believe, that the deficiencies of the Pension-fund are by no means the last that will be made good by Parliament.

Your Petitioner begs leave to observe, That a small Pension is disgraceful and opprobrious, as it intimates a shameful necessity on one part, and a degrading sort of charity on the other; but that a great one implies dignity and affluence on one side; on the other regard and esteem; which, doubtless, your Majesty must entertain in the highest degree, for those great personages whose respectable names stand upon your Eleemosynary list. Your Petitioner, there-

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fore

fore humbly persuades himself, upon this principle, that less than three thousand pounds a year will not be proposed to him: if made up gold the more agreeable; if for life the more marketable.

Your Petitioner persuades himself, that your Majesty will not suspect this his humble application to proceed from any mean, interested motive, of which he has always had the utmost abhorrence. No, Sir, he confesses his own weakness; Honour alone is his object; Honour is his passion; Honour is dearer to him than life. To Honour he has always sacrificed all other considerations; and upon this generous principle, singly, he now solicits that honour, which, in the most shining times, distinguished the greatest men of Greece; who were fed at the expence of the public.

Upon this Honour, so sacred to him as a Peer, so tender to him as a Man, he most solemnly assures your Majesty, that, in case you shall be pleased to grant him this his humble request, he will gratefully and honourably support, and promote with zeal and vigour, the worst measure that the worst Minister can ever suggest to your Majesty: but, on the other hand,

hand, should he be singled out, marked, and branded by a refusal, he thinks himself obliged in honour to declare, that he will, to the utmost of his power, oppose the best and wisest measures that your Majesty yourself can ever dictate.

And your Majesty's Petitioner shall ever pray,

F I N I S,



